



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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John Weishan Owes an Apology and an Explanation

Displays Callous Disregard for Individuals Living with Mental Illness and His Constituents

County Supervisor John Weishan wastefully spent Milwaukee County taxpayer money to mail letters to, among others, Waukesha County residents living well outside of his district. The letter criticized state legislation that would pave the way for desperately needed reforms to Milwaukee County's notoriously substandard mental health care system.

In his letter, Weishan callously warns residents to be fearful of people with mental illnesses moving into their neighborhoods. This comment is outrageously insensitive and reprehensible. People suffering with mental illness are not monsters to be feared. This kind of ignorant, draconian thinking was used in the past to lock up individuals suffering with mental illness in large institutions robbing them of their dignity and depriving them of the care they deserve.

The lack of understanding, cultural competency and indifference shown by Weishan for people suffering with mental illness exemplifies exactly why we need to replace the politicians with medical professionals when it comes to overseeing these critical services.

Supervisor Weishan has been on the County Board for more than a decade and has sat idly by and done absolutely nothing to improve the safety and lives of individuals suffering with mental illness. Weishan had the opportunity to state his concerns at a public hearing for Senate Bill 565 on February 12th, just as other of his fellow supervisors did, but he failed to attend.

When Governor Walker and Speaker Vos made reforming mental health services in our state a priority this session, Senator Vukmir and I took action to make sure the issues unique to Milwaukee would be addressed. We worked tirelessly to seize the opportunity set before us and craft this legislation which received near unanimous bipartisan support in the legislature on a vote of 89 - 1 in the State Assembly and a vote of 33 - 0 in the State Senate. In addition, Senate Bill 565, as amended, has been endorsed by consumers, family members, advocates and providers as well as local elected officials such as County Executive Abele and the Chairwoman of the County Board's Health and Human Needs Committee.

Supervisor Weishan owes his constituents an explanation as to why he is spending their tax money sending letters to people he does not represent living miles outside of the county. Most importantly, he owes an apology to the individuals suffering with mental illness whom he demeaned and degraded with this truly disgusting letter. This reform effort is about the people not the politics.

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